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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2204
April 22, 2020

The Honorable Steve Dickson
Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration
800 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20591

Dear Administrator Dickson:

I write to draw your attention to a discrepancy in the method that recently announced CARES Act (H.R. 748, Public Law 116-136) grants are being distributed. While I appreciate FAA's expeditious efforts in allocating funds provided by the CARES Act, I am concerned the funding methodology negatively impacts certain airports and creates unfair competition between airports located in the same region.

To maintain operations at our nation's airports that are facing a record drop in passengers, the CARES Act appropriated not less than \$7.4 billion "for any purpose for which airport revenues may lawfully be used" and "50 percent of such funds shall be allocated among all commercial service airports based on an equal combination of each sponsor's fiscal year 2018 debt service as a percentage of the combined debt service for all commercial service airports and each sponsor's ratio of unrestricted reserves to their respective debt service." The funding methodology used by FAA to distribute these funds resulted in airports that carry no debt and have no unrestricted cash to receive no funds from this portion of funding, which is not restricted in this legislation.

In my district, FAA's funding methodology has effectively penalized MBS International Airport (MBS) for running a debt-free operation and earmarking cash for future airport capital improvement projects. This means MBS received \$1,968,790 in CARES Act funding. However, the average funding received by six similar airports in the same region is \$13,070,118. Not only is this imbalance the difference between funding operations for six months compared to several years, it has already led to unfair competition between airports. Several airports in the region are now using federal funding to offer cost savings measures – such as rent abatement – to air carriers serving their facilities. MBS has been contacted by those same carriers asking for rent abatement for an unspecified period but cannot afford to take this measure because of the discrepancy in CARES funding it received. This may have a detrimental impact on future service levels and hurt the hardworking men and women in my district who use the airport, as well as those who work there.

The intent of the CARES Act was to assist airport operations through the unprecedented financial hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. I believe FAA's funding methodology that, on average, allocated over six and a half times the amount of funding to airports similar to MBS, and created unfair and unnecessary competition, is a clear and obvious oversight. I request your immediate review of this funding disparity and take corrective actions deemed appropriate to sufficiently support all airports located in the same region.

I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to your response. Please do not hesitate to contact me or my office with any questions.

Sincerely,



John Moolenaar
Member of Congress
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